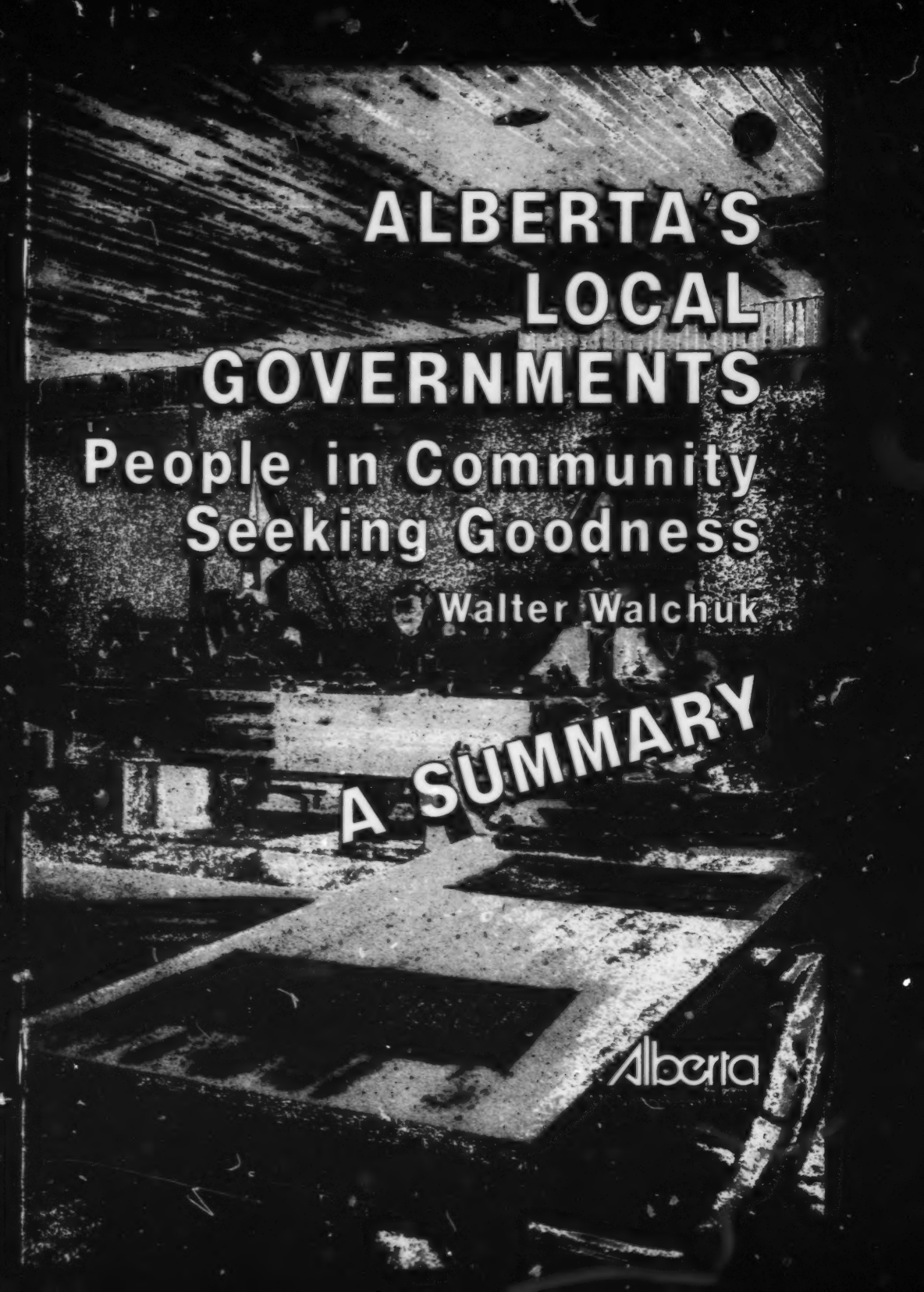
ALBERTA'S
LOCAL
GOVERNMENTS
People in Community
Seeking Goodness
Walter Walchuk
A SUMMARY
Alberta

87-05002/

The material in this document is taken from "Alberta's Local Governments, People in Community Seeking Goodness" published by Alberta Municipal Affairs in 1987. Copies of the complete study have been distributed to all municipalities and education and public libraries in the Province.

Municipal Services Branch
Alberta Municipal Affairs
February 1987

FOREWORD

As a department of government, Alberta Municipal Affairs is celebrating 75 years of service to the people of the province and of support to their municipal governments. Only a minor part of the history of the department is related to its organizational evolution. The major part is related to the history of municipal government in Alberta

The department, therefore, commissioned Walter Walchuk to prepare a report which would present snapshot reviews of municipal life in the past and at present and speculate on issues that might evolve over the next quarter century. In addition to an anniversary publication, the report is expected to serve as resource material for the Municipal Statutes Review Committee in its review of the process of municipal government in this province.

The opinions expressed in the report are those of the author and may not necessarily be supported by the department. They are, however, both thoughtful and thought provoking.

Alberta Municipal Affairs hopes this study will contribute to reflection and discussion on the important role of municipal government in the lives of Albertans in the past, now and in the future.

Archie R. Grover
Deputy Minister
Alberta Municipal Affairs

November, 1986

PREFACE

It is right to celebrate anniversaries. In this instance the focus of the party could legitimately be on the celebrant, Alberta Municipal Affairs, its achievements and those of its former and present staff. However, it has been decided to commemorate a legislative action of 75 years ago by focussing on local government - the institution which the department serves. Hence this study and the Municipal Statutes Review Committee for which the study is a resource document.

All of us are aware of our nation's British and French heritage. But how has this had an impact on our form of local government? Most of us would recognize the significance of the years 1867 and 1905 in terms of the birth of a nation and of a province but few can give the year of approval by the Dominion Parliament of an elected North West Territories Council - 1888. Yet it was this council and its predecessor of appointed and elected legislators that enacted the first laws for municipal government, schools and other public institutions in what is now the Province of Alberta.

Of the three parts, Part One - History, took the longest time to research and write. But much of it was new and interesting to me and it seemed important to be very clear on where we have come from, to know the origins of our laws and attitudes about local government, before we could begin to reflect on changes. For those with limited time you may wish to read only the overview to Part One and leave the remainder for later reference.

The challenge of Part Two - The Present Situation was to not only document the types and functions of local *municipal* government but to cover several boards and associations that govern the provision of a particular service at a local or regional level. While these *single-purpose* governments may be less visible than municipal councils, they must be recognized as important components of *local* government.

The list of issues in local government that conclude Part Two is extensive. After reading these one might become defensive, to argue for the status quo, to exclaim "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." But governments are "broke" to a lesser or greater degree. Re-reading the 37 issues you may be inclined to agree with the suggestion that much of what we do is a continuation of a good policy developed for an earlier time that is no longer relevant.

To what forms of local government do we move? Part Three - A Positive Future is a personal odyssey into the 21st century reflecting my own bias and understanding of a positive future. It begins by providing a context for change. From ancient Athens, to the Magna Carta, to the French Revolution, and to our own legislation in the early 1900's, we can trace a progression to individual equality. The ways in which the systems of local

government are manifest in Europe and elsewhere however, are very broad. The trend to devolution of powers and responsibilities from the national to local/regional level is recognizable not only in these countries but in the United States and Canada.

This shift is one of many responses to the conditions in the world today. For more than 20 years we have been moving out of one system of thought to another, from an industrial era to a post-industrial era or new age. The "hurts" in world cultures, summarized in Chapter 25, are recognizable to most. Taken together, they demand our concerted study and action. The directions that we must move (Chapter 26), a subject of concern for an increasing number of futurists, are being more clearly defined.

What are the implications to our form of local government...or to people in the provincial system, appointed and elected, who have the ability to retard or advance the effectiveness of local governance systems?

I have already referred to the progressive equalization of people over the past several millennia. We have come from master/slave, feudal lord/serf, king/subject and employer/employee relationships and are now shifting to a synergic citizen/citizen relationship where cooperation is the key. Our goal is self-awareness and self-realization achieved through self-directed service to others. The role of government is to guide and inspire citizens in this journey or awakening.

However, the ideals of our form of government, a representative, constitutional democracy are not widely known. More significantly, we are at a time in our evolution that points to some new directions in how we implement "rule by the people". Adversarial democracy needs to become cooperative democracy; individual freedom must complement, not oppose social, economic and political equality.

We all have an important role to play - specially the elected official and public sector employee. Mortimer J. Adler, in his recent book, *A Vision of the Future*, cautions:

> "One of the chief defects in such democracy as now exists on paper or in practice in the United States, and in other societies under constitutional government, stems from the failure on the part of a large majority of the citizens to understand, and their tendency to shirk, the obligations of the high office they hold - its privileges and opportunities as well as its duties." (p. 227-228)

In the years ahead we must make the opportunities for ourselves and our fellow citizens to be given refresher courses on democratic ideals. There is an inverse relationship between the extent that these are in our hearts and minds, and the length of our law book.

The two final chapters are fiction! But if any of the ideas seem plausible solutions to our problems then we should make them the subject of today's agenda and not tomorrow's.

As this report was being prepared, responsibilities for housing and native affairs were added to the Department of Municipal Affairs. This study covers these functions in only a limited way. This includes some current staff and budget data and a listing of Indian Bands in Alberta.

In closing, I would like to acknowledge:

- The support of administrators in Alberta Municipal Affairs in the creation of this study and the necessary assignment of funds - Ian Wight, Tom Lauder, Tom Forgrave, Archie Grover and the Minister at the time of study approval, the Honourable Julian Koziak, and the present Minister, the Honourable Neil Crawford.
- The helpful comments provided by reviewers - Bettie Bayrak, Louise Tebbitt, Tom Forgrave, Jack Fleming, John McGowan, Bill Ashton, and Libuse Kuzel of Alberta Municipal Affairs and, for some sections of Part Three, those of Elizabeth McClintock and Kevin Giles of Alberta Advanced Education.
- A number of people in the department, its associated boards, other provincial departments and various associations - municipal and single-purpose - who provided information and often took the time to review sections relevant to their input.
- Family and friends, especially those at the morning coffee break in the Jarvis Building, who allowed themselves to be used as a testing ground for ideas.
- The fine technical assistance of Jerry Comeau and Karen Weitzel in preparing maps and graphs and of Tony Sykora in the photo-lab.
- The special thoughtfulness and assistance provided by Margaret Suelzle and Sharon Barr in typing, by Carol Schellenberg in editing and researching, and by Piers Churchill in the graphics and arranging for typesetting and printing.

Walter Walchuk
October 1986

ALBERTA'S LOCAL GOVERNMENTS: PEOPLE IN COMMUNITY SEEKING GOODNESS

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Note: The original document consists of 30 chapters divided into three parts – the past, the present and the future. The following text consists of a reprint of Chapters 1, 12 and 20 being the introductory and overview chapters of the three parts.

Chapter One

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

In the initial design of this review of local government the idea was to do "snap shots" of the past, present and future. For the history part these were to begin with the year 1912, the first year of operation of a new Department of Municipal Affairs, and then for each 25th year thereafter – 1937, 1962 and the present. There would also be one for 25 years hence – the year 2012. The first adjustment to the plan was to shift the first snap shot back another 25 years to 1887, a formative time in respect to municipal legislation. As events, attitudes, legislation and statistics were gathered for the four specific time periods questions invariably arose. "When did this piece of legislation get enacted?" or "Where did that tradition start?" It was decided to supplement the "stills" with the story of the intervening years. Indeed, the search for roots became such an interesting one that two short chapters on the history prior to 1887 were also developed.

The author of a recent book *Rules of Thumb*[1] suggests that "a good rule of thumb will turn information that you have into information that you need". The major source of information for this study was the Department of Municipal Affairs library supplemented by the Alberta Museum and Archives in Edmonton and a personal collection of books on local government. The major publications available on local government in Alberta and which can be used by those interested in more detail are: Eric Hanson's *Local Government in Alberta*, published in 1956; Bettison, Kenward and Taylor's book *Urban Affairs in Alberta*, 1975; the Department History Series done on Municipal Affairs in 1984 by Alberta Culture and Jack Masson's recent book *Alberta's Local Governments and Their Politics*. Documents pertaining to conventions of the municipal associations in and around the "snap shot" years proved useful as did a review of all the back issues of the *Alberta Municipal Counsellor*[2] and some of the department's earlier annual reports.

More notes were taken in the course of the research than are presented here. Because the focus was on local municipal government one will find only limited reference to school, hospital, board of health, library or other single-purpose local government forms. On the other hand, because this review commemorates the 75th anniversary of the Department of Municipal Affairs some material is presented which is pertinent to its functions and organization. Photos and examples have been chosen without bias. Finally,

the material presented in this history will hopefully not be in error or at variance with the readers' awareness of events or upset a historian with his or her more finely honed skill in writing of the past.

The following summary is intended to introduce the report and to permit those who wish to skim some chapters to more quickly find that which would be of interest.

CHAPTER TWO – OUR EUROPEAN AND EASTERN CANADIAN HERITAGE

The form of local government in Alberta today reflects our strong former ties with Britain. Canada was governed as a colony and our early immigrants from England and Scotland brought with them customs and forms of local governance that remain here today.

The French system of government tended to have considerable power in the central government with field administrators supervising local government. All forms of local government – small or large, rural or urban, treated alike. The British system distinguished between rural and urban giving the latter more freedom and power. Elected officials acting as local councils had the power to govern as compared to the strong mayor approach of the French.

Neither France nor Britain wished to transfer power to their colonies in the early stages of Canada's settlement. However, not too long after the Anglo-French rivalry shifted in Britain's favour in 1793, the pressure was on for some form of locally elected councils. Although the first municipal charter was given to Saint John (New Brunswick) in 1785, it was in the 1830's that Montreal, Quebec City, York (Toronto) and others received their charters. The first drafts of legislation, considered by the British Parliament in 1840 to unite Upper and Lower Canada into the provinces of Canada, made provision for local government. However, it was decided that the responsibility of establishing local governments would best be left to the legislatures about to be created.

The 1849 Municipal Act enacted by the Ontario legislature was a model for other parts of Canada although the provision for two levels or classes of municipalities was not considered appropriate in the West.

CHAPTER THREE – LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN THE NORTH WEST TERRITORIES BEFORE 1887

In Western Canada, the native population related initially to fur traders and a form of administration by the Hudson's Bay Company. When rule by this company passed to the British Crown in 1869 there was already in

place a local judicial system tied to eastern Canada. The establishment of an appointed Territorial Council for the west beyond Manitoba in 1875 permitted elected representatives when an area's population reached 1,000 people. The Territorial Council, based in Battleford and then Regina, established forms of local government. In 1883, the year that Ottawa gave the council power to enact ordinances respecting municipalities, the North-West Municipal Ordinance was passed. The ordinance was based on Ontario legislation but excluded that province's concept of counties. Initially, the most popular forms of local government in the west were school districts. In 1885 there were 59 school districts but only a handful of municipalities.

CHAPTER FOUR – 1887 – A DESIRE FOR SELF-GOVERNMENT

Immigration to Canada was now in the vicinity of 85,000 people per year. The population of the Territories now consisted of about 80,000 people with one-quarter of these being Indians on reserves. The Riel Rebellion of 1885 was still fresh in the minds of many. Ottawa was now much more sensitive to hopes for local self-determination and in 1888 gave the Territorial Council the right for all its members to be elected.

There were five principal ordinances respecting local governance in place in the Territories in 1887 – the School, Herd, Fire, Municipal and Statute Labor Ordinances.

The 1887 population of Alberta of about 17,000 included a mainly Metis community at St. Albert of 1000 people.

CHAPTER FIVE – 1887 to 1912
OUTSIDE INFLUENCES AND LOCAL ACTIVITIES

The similarity in the pattern of development and the geographic proximity of the United States were now the more dominant influences in the approaches to local government taken in Canada. The most dominant theme was the desire for efficiency and business-like approaches to municipal administration. This was a reaction to the graft and corruption being experienced in many American cities in the late 19th century.

In the early years local governments in Alberta raised funds through taxes on real property, personal property, income and/or a poll tax levied on every person. Farmers could pay off some or all of their taxes by working on municipal roads. In addition to the creation of villages, towns and cities through general legislation or by special charter, there were a number of small and large (more sparsley populated) local improvement districts established. The effect of increasingly aggressive national immigration policies and settlement of the west was especially felt in Alberta in the 1906-1912 period.

CHAPTER SIX – 1912 – A NEW DEPARTMENT OF MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS

When Alberta was made a province in 1905 the responsibility for local government affairs was part of a Department of Public Works. Partly as a result of the need to ensure legislation suitable to the times and partly due to the example provided by the Saskatchewan government, the province created a Department of Municipal Affairs on December 20, 1911. It came into effect at the beginning of 1912 and was required to provide direction to the implementation of new municipal legislation passed early in 1912. The most notable change was the extension of self-government to rural areas in Alberta: 55 rural municipalities came into existence on December 9, 1912. The Department staff (39 full time and 12 part time people as of 1913) was extremely busy that year not only due to the implementation of new legislation but also in the administration of existing Acts including some levying and collection of taxes. Books and records of every municipality were inspected at least once every year. A common feature of assessment was broad support of site value taxation which excluded assessment of improvements. Pressure for subdivision regulations was put off by a promise of government-sponsored regulations in 1913.

CHAPTER SEVEN – 1912 to 1937 – A TIME OF DIFFICULTY

The excitement of developing good legislation in a period of rapid growth gave way to a time of severe difficulties brought on by depressions, a great war and many years of poor crops. The number of rural municipalities – those with self-government – continued to grow. However, much of the legislation in this period related to the imposition of financial controls on municipalities, broadening their tax base, cleaning up the excessive subdivision of lands and assisting in especially difficult situations such as the consolidation, under provincial control, of the financially strapped municipalities now known as the Special Areas.

The concept of city charters continued throughout this period although there was some discussion in the early 1920's about a uniform city Act. The number of rural municipalities and local improvement districts continued to increase. In addition to school districts there were: library boards as of 1912; local or district hospital boards as of 1919; and, drainage districts as of 1921. The first board to supervise the issuance of municipal debentures was the Board of Public Utility Commissioners created in 1915. Legislation to assist the effective administration of the border community of Lloydminster was passed in 1921.

In respect to municipal planning the first Planning Act was developed in 1913. It was hurriedly passed on the last day of the legislative sitting and was never really an important element – growth was not an issue after

1912. The Planning Acts of 1928 and 1929 were much more significant, providing for municipal zoning bylaws, a provincial Planning Advisory Board and district commissions. However, the depression of the 1930's limited provincial support of the planning function. The position of a Provincial Director of Town Planning was not filled upon becoming vacant in 1932.

The economy of the 1930's affected more than the planning function. The municipalities were increasingly burdened with rising welfare related payments and a declining assessment base. Their pleas for provincial assistance may have been heard but were usually not answered. One can understand this stance given that when the Social Credit party formed the government in September 1935, one of the Premier's first actions was to travel to eastern Canada to borrow money and get a grant from Ottawa. There was not enough money in the Treasury upon which to issue the next month's provincial staff pay cheques.

CHAPTER EIGHT – 1937 – RELIEF WAS A BURDEN

The overwhelming theme of a "snap shot" for 1937 is a system of municipal governments continuing to operate but on the leanest of budgets and programs. Relationships with the new provincial government were strained. The resolutions of the urban and rural associations of 1937 focussed on provincial assistance in social welfare programs and the flow of revenue to the municipalities. Both Edmonton and Calgary had to ask for adjustment to their schedule for repayment of debenture debt to avoid bankruptcy. While the long term outcome of the financial crisis was the increasing transfer of responsibility to the provincial and federal governments, the rural municipalities were not necessarily in support of centralization. They believed, for example, that because of their knowledge of a family's situation, they could more wisely deal with welfare payments. There was not much new municipal legislation in 1936 or 1937 but legislation was being drafted in several areas for consideration in 1938.

CHAPTER NINE – 1937 to 1962 – CONSOLIDATION THEN GROWTH

The period 1937 to 1962 had two over-riding themes. The first was consolidation – of school districts, municipal districts, improvement districts, and school and municipal functions into counties, and city charters into a City Act. The second theme was a response to the very rapid growth of the province with substantially revised planning legislation, a New Towns Act and new arrangements for municipal financing.

In 1938 the six special areas in southeast Alberta were consolidated under the administration of a three person board with powers of a municipal council. Several Metis settlements were established under the Metis

Population Betterment Act. The 3,771 school districts of 1936 were combined into 50 divisions by 1941. The 143 municipal districts of 1941 were reduced to 60 by 1944 and 28 in 1962. Of the 216 improvement districts in 1941, 50 remained in 1962.

The rapid growth of the province from 1947 onwards required new planning legislation. The amendments of 1948 and 1950 and the consolidation of the Planning Act in 1953 emphasized the need to achieve an efficient pattern of physical development. Interim development control was provided for pending the adoption or revision of zoning bylaws. The processing of the increasingly large number of subdivisions was guided by detailed subdivision and transfer regulations. Approval authority was extended to the Edmonton and Calgary District Planning Commissions in 1953.

Municipal-provincial financial affairs were guided for a time by a major report prepared by J. W. Judge, the Department of Municipal Affairs' Deputy Minister, in 1948. It was recognized that the local tax base was limited and that the province had the resources to accept greater responsibility for public welfare. A system of unconditional grants to all municipalities was introduced in 1951.

Toward the end of this 25 year period the Provincial Municipal Advisory Committee met regularly and provided an effective focus for dealing with (usually) the financial issues.

The County Act of 1950 brought the option of rural municipalities combining school and municipal functions under one elected council. An initial hope of the Minister of Municipal Affairs to include hospital functions in the county form was not fulfilled. The Cities Act of 1951 brought the seven cities operating through separate city charters under one act. The development of resource towns was guided by a New Towns Act of 1956.

CHAPTER TEN – 1962 – CONTINUING GROWTH

In contrast with 1937, the year 1962 reflects a period of continuing prosperity. Oil and agriculture were strong and municipal inspectors were so busy that for the first time in a number of years an inspection was not completed in each of the 300 municipalities that year.

But there were tensions and concerns. Municipal officials were concerned with the increasing property taxes while elected provincial leaders were cautioning municipalities against relying too much on provincial funds lest local autonomy be threatened. A big topic in 1962 was education funding, arising from the establishment of the School Foundation Program in 1961. Municipal financing of growth was also in the forefront. There was a lot of discussion, especially at the municipal association conventions, but no unanimity in the desired approaches to raising the funds needed to finance growth.

Eighteen Acts relating to Municipal Affairs were dealt with by the legislature in 1962. There was an Act to permit the creation of an urban county, and a Local Authorities Pension Act that applied to municipal, school and hospital employees. A program to assist in the financing of local recreation facilities and the creation of the Northern Alberta Development Council were announced. While a new Planning Act was drafted in 1961 it was held back by the Minister until 1963 to ensure a balance between individual and community rights. The staff of the department had grown to 346 people.

CHAPTER ELEVEN – 1962 to 1986 – A RICH TAPESTRY

As this history comes closer to the present the supply of reference material increases. So does one's own personal recollection of events. It seemed natural, in the main text, to prepare a few more pages on this last period of the review.

One of the highlights over the last 25 years was the "rise and fall" of federal involvement in municipal affairs. Beginning with the National Housing Act of 1964, the federal government developed programs in urban renewal and public housing. For a time there was a Ministry of State for Urban Affairs and a federal task force examining the problems and prospects of urban Canada.

Several of the federal funding programs were eventually merged in the late 1970's into an urban infrastructure program and available funding declined. The federal impetus forced the province to develop an administrative structure and a provincial Housing Act to guide the application process and give authority to cost sharing of approved projects.

At the provincial level there were a number of review committees and task forces established mostly to consider the issues of how to plan and finance the rapid growth of the province. The provincial Municipal Advisory Committee was effective throughout most of the 1960's. With the change in government effective in September 1971, the Task Force on Urbanization and the Future was phased out while the Farran Task Force and the Alberta Provincial Municipal Finance Council were phased in. In the early 1970's the provincial policy on municipal finances was to bonus those communities which were able to limit their expenditure increases. However, throughout the 1970's there were a variety of capital grant programs developed such as the capital city and other urban parks programs to finance needed or desired infrastructure. All of this culminated in a $1 billion Municipal Debt Reduction Program in 1979. The changing economic times of the 1980's have limited the development of new programs. The December 1985 report of the Grant Structures Review Committee presents a recent statement of

a review of 80 provincial transfer programs to municipalities. Recommendations include: annual adjustments for inflation; transfers based on population; coordination of programs; and transfers for purposes easily understood by the public.

In respect to planning, the main items over the last 25 years include: a changing composition and role of the Alberta Planning Board, the requirement for regional and general municipal plans, continued devolution of subdivision approval authority and the merging of development control and zoning bylaw systems. New Planning Acts were passed in 1963 and 1977.

There was a major review of municipal government legislation in 1966 and 1967 leading to the passage in 1968 of the Municipal Government Act and the Municipal Election Act. Several Acts were consolidated and municipalities, except for counties, improvement districts, and Special Areas, came under the same Acts. The Communal Property Act respecting Hutterite communities was repealed in 1973. In 1974 a Northeast Alberta Commission was established. In 1978 several communities in the Crowsnest Pass area were amalgamated. Studies in 1978-79 on Banff and Jasper did not lead to any basic changes in the federal, provincial or local roles in the governance of these communities. A review of the Metis Betterment Act and regulations, by a joint Metis-government committee chaired by Dr. Grant MacEwan, began deliberations in 1982 and reported in 1984, recommending considerably more autonomy and responsibility for the Metis Settlements. A review of "conflict of interest" matters was initiated in 1984 and amendments have been prepared for consideration by the legislature. A review of municipal government legislation was announced in April 1986. A committee is to be selected with an anticipated report date of January 1, 1988.

In the 1973-75 period there was an internal review and restructuring of the Department of Municipal Affairs. Although there have been some changes in the decade since then the essential elements of the structure remained intact until May 1986 when responsibilities for housing and native affairs were added.

References to Chapter One

1. Tom Parker, *Rules of Thumb*, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1983.
2. The title changed from *Alberta Municipal Counsellor* to *Municipal Counsellor* as of January 1975.

Chapter Twelve

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

Part One of this report outlines the development of the local government structure in Alberta. Based on patterns developed in Britain and eastern Canada, the North West Territories Council enacted ordinances in the 1880's providing for elected boards and councils to administer school and municipal functions. The paramount role of provincial governments in providing the framework for local government in Canada has resulted in somewhat different forms evolving over the last 100 years in each province.

The purpose of this part is to outline the present situation in Alberta respecting local government. The "snap shots" taken in the years 1887, 1912, 1937 and 1962 indicate the great differences as well as some similarities between these periods and the present.

From an economic point of view, the province is presently being buffeted quite severely by low and volatile oil prices and by low world prices for grain. While average income for the employed is high in comparison to other Canadians, unemployment at 11-13 percent is also about the highest in the nation. Subdivision and building activity is very low. There is an important need for economic development strategies at both the local and provincial level.

The society-at-large seems to be in a period of great change. There is a general disenchantment with government. World tensions and the absence of peace, a polluted environment, and the weakness of the "social contract" between people in supporting and caring for each other represent the mood of the times for some. Decentralization, privatization, the rise of the voluntary sector, the desire to strengthen family, and the shift from a fragmented perspective to one of wholeness are some other elements of the present condition.

The format of this second part of the study is to:

(a) describe the number and type of local municipal governments in the province including a description of some unique situations such as the Special Areas, the Banff and Jasper townsites and Lloydminster;

(b) review other governments at the local and regional level. This includes boards and commissions to which members are elected directly or to which elected members are appointed. It covers their creation and operation (mandatory or optional) provided for by provincial law;

(c) review the organization and duties of the Department of Municipal Affairs and related provincial boards;
(d) summarize Acts administered by Municipal Affairs and list other Acts which significantly impact local government; and
(e) explore the issues, strengths and trends in local government as seen in recent municipal association conventions, and as garnered from recent policy documents, the press and from a variety of meetings with some departmental staff.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN – URBAN MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS

There are 374 municipalities in the province of which 296 are urban – the cities, towns, villages and summer villages. Together they contain almost 80 percent of the provincial population. The 16 cities are very dominant in respect to percentage of the population, containing 65 percent. Each is governed by a mayor and council of six to 14 aldermen. The City of Lloydminster, on the Alberta/Saskatchewan border, is the only municipality still operating with a provincially approved charter.

The 108 towns of Alberta, normally between 1,000 and 10,000 people, contain 13 percent of the provincial population. A town is governed by a mayor and six councillors all elected at large. One of the unique towns is the Municipality of Crowsnest Pass, formed by special legislation in 1979 through unification of several municipalities. Another is the New Town of Rainbow Lake run by a chairman and a board.

The 122 villages are governed by a council of three or, if desired, five councillors, one of whom shall be mayor. Village populations range from about 100 to 1,000.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN – RURAL MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS

There are 78 rural municipalities: counties and municipal districts (50), improvement districts (19), Metis Settlements (8), and Special Areas (1) containing 443,000 people or 19 percent of the provincial total. The county form of government brings school and municipal administration under one council. Improvement districts are rural areas without full local self-government. The National Park improvement districts are unique in that the federal, rather than provincial government provides the administration. The communities of Banff and Jasper have their own elected school boards with municipal matters guided by advisory councils as of 1986. Alberta is the only province in Canada to provide for separate Metis Settlements. The Special Areas in southeast Alberta are governed by a provincially appointed advisory council of 13 and an administrative board of three people. Indian Reserves, which together contain about 43,000 people, are a federal matter and are not considered as municipalities.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN – LOCAL AND REGIONAL SINGLE-PURPOSE GOVERNMENTS

The 13 local/regional single-purpose governments reviewed in this chapter are provided for through provincial legislation. Their implementation and/or the involvement of residents or municipalities may be mandatory or optional. These governments also vary in the way that members of the board or council are chosen. The first three, and the oldest – school boards, irrigation districts and drainage districts – have elected boards. Board members of hospital districts may, at the option of the municipality(s), be appointed or directly elected. The boards for the hospital districts, health units, regional planning commissions, and municipal and regional libraries consist of appointed members who may be elected officials or sometimes selected from the community at large. There is considerably more freedom in the establishment of police commissions, regional waste management authorities, regional services commissions, rural business projects and regional recreation boards. All of these single-purpose governments, except the regional recreation boards as of the early 1980's, benefit in some way through grants from the province. The Northern Alberta Development Council is a unique regional body assisting in the provision of programs and services in the sparsely populated northern part of the province.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN – THE DEPARTMENT OF MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS

When this study began, Alberta Municipal Affairs consisted of four main operating divisions and three units providing administrative services. It had a budget of $38 million in 1986-87, mostly to cover the cost of the 675 staff, and distributed about $330 million through several grant programs. As a result of the addition of the Housing Department and some responsibilities for Native Affairs the number of permanent staff position increased to 836 and the approved budget now totals $657 million.

Assessment Services maintains an assessment manual and prepares assessments for 310 municipalities, as well as pipeline and power assessments throughout the province. Improvement Districts and Native Services provides municipal services in improvement districts and Metis Settlements and is responsible for coordination and analysis of Metis and Native issues generally. Municipal Administrative Services assists municipalities through its advisory, inspection, information and research services, the distribution of grant funds to municipalities and citizens. Planning Services assists in the development of land use planning policy and provides a planning service to areas outside of regional planning commissions and to the Alberta Planning Board. The housing division provides financial and in some cases training assistance for new home construc-

tion, home improvement and rental housing, with an emphasis on lower income and senior citizen households. The other units are Finance and Administration, Corporate Communications, Personnel and the department solicitor.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN – BOARDS

The Alberta Assessment Appeal Board hears appeals from decisions of authorities such as municipal governments and the chief provincial assessor on assessment of property. The role of the Alberta Assessment Equalization Board is to factor to a common level of value all the property assessments throughout the province. The Alberta Planning Board is responsible for the administration of the Planning Act and related regulations including approval of regional plans, the hearing of subdivision appeals and funding of regional planning commissions. The Local Authorities Board authorizes municipal and school debenture borrowing and makes recommendations on annexation or separation of land as well as several other functions of a financial or property tax nature. These boards operate independently of the department but are closely related in respect to the functions which the department administers.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN – MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS STATUTES AND OTHERS

The department administers the Municipal Government Act, Local Authorities Election Act, County Act, Municipal Taxation Act and Planning Act, and 36 other Acts. The more significant ones are summarized in this chapter. There are also a number of private Acts. These are often quite dated and usually pertain to the granting of certain authority to a municipality.

A computer search was made of other provincial statutes that refer to municipal governments. A list of 43 from the comprehensive list of 197 different statutes is provided.

CHAPTER NINETEEN – ISSUES

This chapter reviews the resolutions that were considered at recent conventions of the three municipal associations in the province, the provincial response to these and a list of 37 current municipal issues. The concerns of the urban association were more financially oriented (20 of 47) while those of the rural association were more related to legislative amendments (21 of 31). Resolutions of the spring 1986 conventions for the rural and the improvement district associations have not yet been

responded to. The resolutions are broad ranging and many departments assist in the preparation of responses.

The issues are categorized into:

- the broader issues of our times, e.g., does our style of governance allow the long-run issues of our society to be studied? in a period of restraint are the policies of the three orders of government sufficiently integrated? and, should local governments be recognized in a constitution?
- local government issues, e.g., how important is it to have local self-government in Banff, Jasper, the Special Areas and the Improvement Districts? is the rural/urban boundary split any longer a rational model? could the assumption that municipalities can only undertake those functions expressly provided for in law be reversed? and, would the quality of one government improve by limiting the number of consecutive elected terms of office?
- some specific issues, e.g., can a (desirable) shift to market value assessment be implemented more quickly? can school boards be more sensitive to financial implications? does the existence of three municipal associations serve local and provincial needs best? and, is there a need for the function of the municipal inspector to shift to one of encouragement of and education for effective local government?

While "peace, order and good government" is being achieved to a considerable degree by local government in Alberta, it has been 20 years since the last major review of the key Municipal Government Act. There is, therefore, a challenge to freely explore the issues and develop new legislation based on our clearest vision and highest ideals.

TABLE 1

ALBERTA MUNICIPALITIES, 1986

Type	Number	Elected Officials	Percent of Total Elected Officials	1985 Population	Percent of Alberta Population
URBAN					
cities	16	136	6.7	1,524,630	64.4
towns	108	757	37.1	304,807	12.9
villages	122	485	23.7	47,274	2.0
summer villages	50	147	7.2	3,366	0.1
sub-total	298	1,525	74.6	1,880,077	79.4
RURAL					
municipal districts	20	132	6.5	109,855	4.6
counties	30	220	10.8	252,202	10.7
improvement districts	14	113[1]	5.5	59,101	2.5
National Park I.D.s	5	n/a[2]		11,131	0.5
Metis settlements	8[3]	40	2.0	4,820	0.2
Special Areas	1[4]	13[1]	0.6	6,042	0.3
sub-total	78	518	25.4	443,151	18.7
Municipalities Total	374	2,043		2,323,228	
Indian Bands	43	n/a		45,722[5]	1.8
TOTAL			100.0	2,368,950	100.0

[1] Although members of the advisory council are elected their position is confirmed through appointment by the Minister of Municipal Affairs

[2] Banff and Jasper elect six and eight school trustees respectively who are responsible for some functions normally administered by a municipal council

[3] The Metis Settlements have not traditionally been included in a listing of Alberta's municipalities. However, since settlement councils have as much, if not more authority than improvement district councils, the eight settlements are included hence increasing the count from 366 to 374.

[4] While formally there are three Special Areas, there is only one board and one administration.

[5] As of May 1986.

Figure 2.1

Chapter Twenty

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

The search for better local government can take many paths. To one who may not want to repeat the mistakes of the past, the preference would be for a historical analysis drawing out the finest times as examples for today's use. Another approach might be to study the writings of the "wise" men and women of the past. Alternatively, the legislation of other countries could provide useful reference points. Yet another approach would be to examine municipal legislation in the other provinces and the territories. With similar roots and sharing one national perspective, the knowledge of how these have dealt with this topic would seem to be especially relevant.

To some extent all of these approaches will be discussed. However, the path for the greater part will be one which is wide and not well defined. Over the last 20 – 25 years there has been an increasing number of people who, in reflecting on the condition of our society, have found much that is wanting. Having defined or noted the concerns, the desire for better ways has led them to inspired action or writing or both. A number of networks have developed connecting these people who are known as "futurists" or "new agers". Through conferences, books, articles, and actions, some common themes on new directions have evolved. These will be noted and used as a background or base upon which are developed some elements of a desired structure of local government.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE- LOCAL GOVERNMENT- ANCIENT ATHENS TO TODAY

Although the form of government developed in the Greek city-states would be considered flawed by today's standards, it presented many elements that would be included in a current list of ideals of a democratic system, i.e. citizen equality, elections, unpaid service, and limited terms of office. Wealth was not to be a factor in the qualification to serve. With the decline of the autocratic Roman Empire early in the fifth century, western society shifted to rulership by feudal lords, kings, oligarchies and dictators. The church also had a significant role, especially in the fifth to fifteenth centuries. The growing capitalism and budding sense of local authority, formalized in municipal charters in the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries, was followed in the nineteenth century by the widespread intro-

duction of democratically elected governments. The vote was extended to all adult residents in the twentieth century.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO – VIEWS ON THE FORM AND NATURE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

This chapter is a collection, of quotations without comment, from the writings of: Aristotle; Alexis de Tocqueville; Lord Durham; the Lieutenant Governor of the North West Territories (1893); John Perrie; municipal association statements; A. J. Hooke; Lewis Mumford; Jack Masson; Willis Harmon and Hwa Yol Jung. This chapter also contains Aristotle's 11 point summary of democracy.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE – LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN OTHER NATIONS

There is a great variety of structures of local government throughout the world. This chapter presents a synopsis of the current situation in Europe with highlights on the Republic of Ireland, Scotland, Britain, Switzerland and the United States. The general trend is to the devolution of powers to the local level. A partial exception would be Britain where the Conservative central government has recently abolished seven metropolitan councils, mostly Labor Party dominated.

The concept of city charters remains quite common in the United States and Europe. Several European nations provide for local government in national constitutions. An excerpt on local government in the Japanese Constitution is provided.

After a lull of about 15 years, there is some resurgence in the study of local government throughout Canada. Each province is briefly reviewed as to its current form of local government, some of the past and current studies that have been undertaken and new legislation passed. The most current significant review is probably the one currently being undertaken in Quebec by the provincial department responsible for municipal affairs as well as an independent review sponsored by the Union des Municipalites de Quebec. In Manitoba, a study committee recently tabled its report containing 73 recommendations on government in Metropolitan Winnipeg. The government of the Northwest Territories will likely be tabling revised legislation in its fall 1986 session.

The Macdonald Commission report of 1985 is reviewed and several references to local government are presented; the theme is increased local powers, increased funding to municipalities and few autonomous boards that act independently of local government.

The delegates to the 1986 convention of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities dealt with a variety of resolutions from across the country and with policy reports submitted by several of its task forces.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE – A STUDY OF FUTURES – THE ISSUES

A total of 21 world-scale issues are presented. These reflect items that are typically noted by futurists as driving forces for change. The issues are:

1. continuing international conflict with the potential for atomic warfare
2. pollution of air, soil and water
3. environmental degradation.
4. hunger
5. rising unemployment
6. poverty
7. energy and mineral shortages
8. species extinction
9. crime
10. third world debt
11. inequality – racial, sexual
12. consumerism and high consumption
13. excessive growth of government
14. drug and alcohol abuse
15. sexual mores
16. the weakening of the family unit
17. technology without values
18. leadership
19. perceptions of reality
20. human values
21. our spiritual nature.

Each item on the list is not, in itself, likely to surprise anyone or cause one to change individual practices. Taken together, however, they are sufficient to cause some futurists to predict societal collapse unless there are significant shifts in these trends.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX – DIRECTIONS FOR A POSITIVE FUTURE

Nineteen directions are presented for consideration:

1. to understand and develop synergy (cooperation and win-win solutions)
2. servant leadership
3. creative living and full employment
4. decentralization
5. self-reliance
6. organizational structure (horizontal, shared ownership)
7. entrepreneurship
8. education; learning to learn
9. networking
10. generalists
11. stewardship
12. creativity
13. long-term view
14. income distribution
15. conserver society
16. soft energy path
17. health promotion
18. mind and expanded consciousness
19. spirituality.

Again, as with the issues, any one direction for change is not in itself going to bring the ideal society. Collectively, they represent a comprehensive response to the issues of the previous chapter.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN – THE AGE OF RELATIONSHIPS

The age that we are now upon has been given a variety of names – the third wave, communications era and post-industrial society. This chap-

ter proposes that a more useful image might be to consider this an age of relationships.

There would be four main aspects of such an era:

1. an awareness of self
2. our relationship with others;
3. our relationship with nature; and
4. our relationship with God.

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT – DEMOCRACY AND GOODNESS

Governments exist because we do not consider curselves sufficiently wise to make decisions that promote our own self-realization and the welfare of others. The democratic form of government means rule by the people. We need to explore the historic definitions of democracy because what has been implemented has varied considerably from the ideal. More importantly, the current world conditions and new visions of the future point to adjustments in the historic ideal.

This includes:

- a shift from competitive democracy to cooperative democracy;
- the individual as the focal point;
- building governments from the smallest base to the larger; and
- the development of a new kind of servant leader.

"People in Community Seeking Goodness" is explained – persons in fraternity coming to know themselves through unselfish service. Governments would inspire us in this journey.

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE – 2012 A.D.

This chapter is a short story of two local government interns about to begin a six month work experience with Alberta Municipal Affairs in the year 2012 A.D.

Some of the significant changes include:

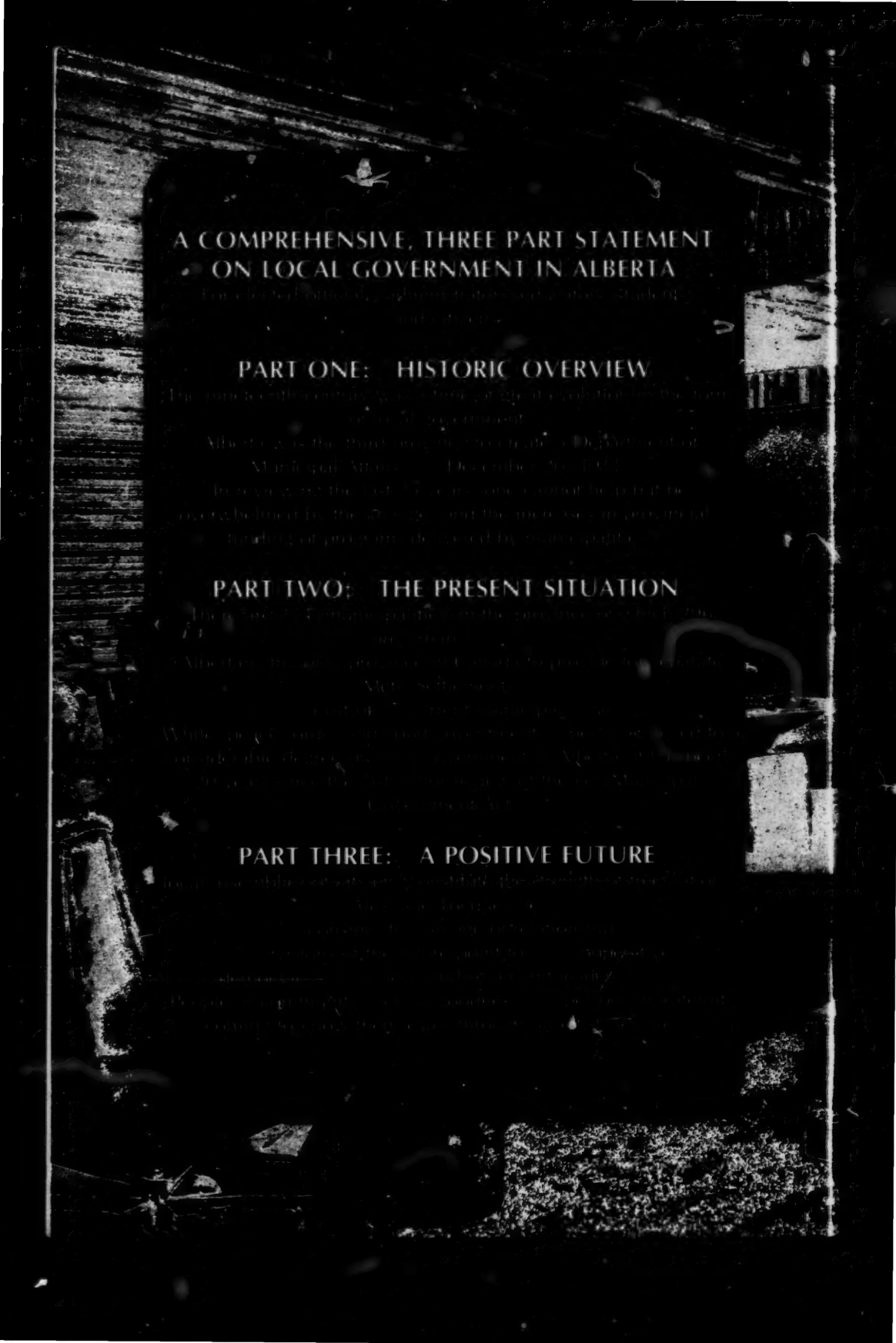
1. an increase in the number of municipalities
2. the existence of two kinds of municipalities
   - incorporated municipalities (the majority)
   - special-purpose municipalities, each approved by the legislature, with the significant power of controlling the right of membership in the municipality;
3. considerable involvement of the private, non-profit and volunteer sector in service delivery;
4. inter-municipal servicing agreements are common; and
5. considerably reduced and newly formatted legislation.

CHAPTER THIRTY – THE HISTORY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN ALBERTA, 1987-2011

This chapter is written from the perspective of a researcher in 2012 A.D. It represents, for the most part, a positive vision for local government and the Department of Municipal Affairs. The text provides the background to some of the ideas presented in the previous chapter and develops some additional directions. Some of the latter ones are:

- greater involvement of women in local municipal councils, considerable expansion of "civics" in the school curriculum and the extension of voting rights to persons 14 years and older;
- shifts in responsibilities of the department to knowledge development, and from regulation and control to promotion and training;
- departmental support in the experimentation of new techniques in local governance; and
- few municipal level appeals to provincial boards.

The footnotes to this chapter provide an additional basis for the ideas, often referring to beginning trends noticeable in the mid-1980's.



A COMPREHENSIVE, THREE PART STATEMENT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN ALBERTA

PART ONE: HISTORIC OVERVIEW

PART TWO: THE PRESENT SITUATION

PART THREE: A POSITIVE FUTURE